

JULIA IGNACIO SILVA

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Julia Ignacio Silva

(1892 - 1972)

Mrs. Silva is a third generation descendant of immigrants from San Miguel Island, Portugal, who came to make a future for themselves in the Hawaiian Islands.

As soon as her maternal grandparents established residence, they obtained a homestead in the Hakalau district on the Island of Hawaii and remained there the rest of their lives.

Her father, Marion Ignacio, came to Hawaii in 1882 at the age of eighteen. He was employed by the Onomea Sugar Company as an overseer in charge of plowing until his death in 1913. He married Stephanie Marques and they had eleven children.

The family lived in a plantation house until Mr. Ignacio was able to build his own home. After attending the plantation school, Julia Ignacio taught school for three years at nearby Papaikou. She gave up teaching when she was married in 1915.

Mrs. Silva recalls the economic, social, and cultural aspects of life on a plantation.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

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INTERVIEW WITH JULIA IGNACIO SILVA

August 1971

S: Julia I. Silva

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

M: Well, could I just ask you questions and you answer them?

S: Okay.

M: Could we do that? Can I move this?

S: Yes.

M: To set this here. Well, let's see. Let's start with names, so I get names straight. Can you give me your full name.

S: My name? Julia Ignacio Silva, now.

M: Ignacio Silva. Is this Silva your married name?

S: Um hm. Ignacio is my maiden name.

M: Your maiden name. How do you spell that?

S: I-G-N-A-C-I-O.

M: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

S: My father was Marion Ignacio. My mother was Stephanie Marques. That's her maiden name.

M: How do you spell the Marques?

S: M-A-R-Q-U-E-S.

M: And your father's first name, how do you spell that?

S: Marion Ignacio. M-A-R-I-O-N Ignacio.

M: Okay. How did your parents come here to Hawaii?

S: You ask me that. (chuckles) They came on a boat, I guess. I don't know. Sailing vessel. I don't know if it was a sailing boat or what, but they came around the Cape Horn. So that's all I remember. I was little when, you know, and I never paid attention.

M: Were you born here then?

S: I was born. . . . My mother got married here and my father.

M: I see, so they came as very young people.

S: My father was eighteen years old and my mother was only eight when she came down. She's much younger than my father; was much younger than my father.

M: Did your father come by himself or with his family?

S: Yeh, he came with another group of people.

M: From Portugal.

S: Um hm.

M: And your mother came with her parents from Portugal.

S: Uh, from Portugal.

M: Do you know why they came, decided to come to Hawaii?

S: Well, like everybody else, they wanted to get more of their future, you know.

M: Uh huh. What part of Portugal did they come from, do you know?

S: My mother came from Saint Michael's [San Miguel Island] and my father came from one of the islands too. I don't know if it was the same island, but they met here and got friendly, you know, and they got married.

M: What did your father do when he first came?

S: Oh, he worked in the plantations.

M: Which one?

S: Onomea Sugar.

M: Which one?

S: Onomea Sugar Company. It's dissolved now. It's C. Brewer [and Company, Limited].

M: Onamei.

S: Onomea. O-N-O-M-E-N-O. [She pronounces it correctly but misspells it. Onomea is correct.] It's C. Brewer and Company now.

M: Is that on Maui?

S: Hawaii.

M: Kauai?

S: Hawaii.

M: Hawaii. And what [did] your mother's parents do when they first came, do you know?

S: Uh huh. They didn't work. The daughters helped them out. As far as I know, my father, after he was married, and my uncle, they married, and they bought a homestead for my grandfather to make the residence for the young people. They lived there--it was in their name--but after the time came they transferred to the children's name.

M: I see. Where was the homestead?

S: I don't know the name now. That's why I didn't want to get into this because I don't know these things.

M: Well, that's okay, but it's near what?

S: Hakalau. Honokaa side. Not Honokaa, Hakalau side. They had a homestead. I went as a little girl and stayed with my--I remember going there, you know, and staying with her a few weeks but I was too young. I didn't pay attention.

M: When they lived at the homestead, did they have younger children then?

S: No, no, they didn't. The two old people were alone and we used to go there. Their children had a lot of children. That is, my mother had eleven and my brother--in fact, my brother, George--he's dead now--used to stay with her most of the time because he was a boy, you know. We'd go over there and stay for a week or so. So my history is not so hot. (laughter)

- M: That's okay. Then what did your father. . . ?
- S: My father was kind of a head luna in the plantation. Well, he was a team luna, you know, of the horses, plows, and things like that. Made very little money those days. Very little money.
- M: What plantation was he working on when you were born?
- S: In Onomea. He was married there and he stayed there and he died there. And I got married there. We had a homestead. I have nothing to do with it anymore. Um hm. My father had a homestead and he died and we took care of it, all the boys, those that were working and myself.
- M: So your parents had then--do you know where they met, your parents?
- S: That I couldn't tell you. I think they met here [in Honolulu]. I don't know where they met. They came as pilgrims, you know.
- M: Which one of the eleven children are you?
- S: The Ignacio.
- M: But I mean, of the eleven children that your mother had.
- S: I'm the second. First, my brother. He died two years ago and then I'm the second and then we have a boy next to me and that's my brother that's a mortician in Hilo, Frank Ignacio. He's still living. He's in his seventies.
- M: Can you tell me now something about your life on the plantation when you were a child?
- S: Well, I was just a young girl. We'd go to school, come back. Oh, let me see. I taught school for three years but I didn't have a certificate. I was one of the tall girls. I came to summer school to brush-up, you know, because I didn't graduate high school. I was at high school when we quit school and--oh, what was I going to say? I don't want to lie about it. (chuckles) Then I went back and they gave me a position. At the country those days it was so hard to get teachers and the principal knew me and my mother was kind of hard-up, too, you know, and they gave me a job and I was getting only thirty-five dollars a month, but that helped, you know, because we lived right across the schoolhouse. I didn't have to pay transportation or anything like that, so. I taught three years but I fell in love with my husband and I got married and after

I got married I came to Honolulu and he didn't want me to teach. I didn't have a certificate anyhow but I could work myself up like some of the other girls.

M: Um hm. How many children in this school, when you were teaching?

S: Well, I had about forty-five children in my class. I taught the second grade.

M: This is at Onomea.

S: Yeh, Papaikou. Now it's called the Kaiulani School, I think. Um hm. They've changed.

M: Can you go back? Tell me something about your home life with this huge family of children.

S: Well, we got along very nicely. It was a very, very happy home, you know. We'd do our routine work and at night we'd sit down. And my father built a big home for us before he died on the homestead of us. We had a school and we'd sing together. There were so many children, you know. We had a happy life while we were young all together.

M: Can you tell me something about problems with the . . . ? For instance, when you were younger, before your father built the big house, you lived in a plantation house?

S: I lived in the plantation house. Oh yes.

M: That must have been pretty crowded, huh?

S: Well, we had three bedrooms, but it was crowded, you know, very. Oh, regular plantation. In those days they didn't have nice homes like they have now. Cracks on the floors. Rough lumber. But we were young kids. We didn't think anything of it. (chuckles)

M: Didn't know better. (chuckles)

S: No, no. My mother always had one or two cows. My father was a real horseman. My father loved horses. He always had a lovely horse to work with and it was kept in the plantation stables at night and he'd walk home. We didn't live far from there.

Jack Moir--his father was the manager there when my father was--when we were there. We went to school together, Jack and I. So. I don't know much about it. You ask questions and I can. . .

M: I'm just thinking now what I need to. . .

S: We used to walk quite far to go to school. I worked very hard to help my mother bring up the kids. I was the only girl. We were eleven but the oldest was a boy and then there was me, then a boy, and another boy and a girl after that, so. The other one.

M: So you really had to pitch in.

S: Uh huh.

M: What time would you go to school, eight to two?

S: Well, we'd leave home about eight-thirty. School opened at nine o'clock those days and we had to walk quite a distance to school but we didn't mind it.

M: Uh huh. You didn't have to walk through the snow and the cold anyway. (chuckles)

S: No, we didn't mind it at all. And walked barefooted.

M: Yeh. Can you remember some of your teachers that you had?

S: I remember one teacher. I don't know her name now. No, I don't remember.

M: How many children in the school? Was it a big school?

S: Oh, I don't know. It was a big school.

M: You had a separate room for each grade.

S: One for each grade, yeh, and some of the grades had two separate grades, one teacher because there wasn't room enough, you know.

M: Uh huh. Were these mostly plantation kids in this school?

S: Yes, all plantation children. All plantation kids.

M: So it must have been a fairly large plantation.

S: Yeh, it was. Now they have a great big school on that same spot. Very, very modern school. It has everything. But I don't know much about it now.

M: How did you manage things like washing clothes for this huge family?

- S: Well, that was all included in the plantation. There was a little flume, like, that passed between the people's residence and each one would walk--my father made a little platform, a little trail like. But it was close so that we would walk on the mark and we washed with the water running from the flume. There was a little pipe, like, you know. We didn't mind it at all. That's all we had.
- M: Yeh, but how could you scrub clothes? You mean you just sort of held them up to the water or what?
- S: Oh, no, we had a great big tub. Yeh, the water came from the flume but a small flume.
- M: I see. Then you just sort of scrub it in the tub.
- S: Scrub it in the tub. Well, my brothers right then there they weren't working in the field, too, till we were in the homestead. They worked up at my father's field. But we used to boil clothes at that time. We had a lot of wood. The plantation gave us the wood and I had a little fireplace and two cans. One big can, I put the clothes in there and just boil and boil and boil (Lynda laughs) and we saw that the clothes was nice and clean.
- M: Oh boy.
- S: It was a nice life, when I go back. It was nice.
- M: Did you ever take trips into Hilo?
- S: Yeh, I would go to Hilo. We had a train then. The train went as far as Honokaa and back.
- M: So you could just get on the train and go.
- S: Um hm, we'd go on the train.
- M: How long would it take you to get to Hilo?
- S: Oh, it didn't take us long. About fifteen minutes. It didn't take us long from where I lived.
- M: Would you go into town to buy groceries and stuff like that?
- S: No, we bought right at the plantation store. The plantation had everything for the people. We had a post office. The post office wasn't so close to our place.
- M: Were there a lot of Portuguese people on this plantation?

S: Yes, there was lots of Portuguese people.

M: Did you have your own village?

S: Yes, um hm. We didn't live too far from the store. We could walk. Everything was walk. There was no riding.

M: You didn't have your own horse or anything like that?

S: I had my own horse but we didn't take it for those little short rides, you know. I had my own.

M: What would you use your horse for? Just for fun?

S: The time before my father passed away when we were in our homestead, I had a horse because I had a homestead too and I used to go there once or twice a week to sleep there so I could make the residence. I was then teaching.

M: Oh, I see, you have to live on your homestead in order to . . .

S: Yes, you have to live on your homestead.

M: How much would you pay for a homestead in those days?

S: Well, I couldn't tell you. I didn't finish the residence but you have to live there, you know, until you have the patent.

M: The land wasn't free though.

S: No, no. We paid for it. I don't know if the land was four hundred dollars or five hundred dollars because I didn't stay until it ended but it was cultivated with cane and we had it leased outside and we made quite a bit of money. And when I got married, I transferred my name to my brother and he completed the homestead.

M: I see. Did your parents grow a garden and stuff like that?

S: Yes, we did. At the plantation house we had a garden. Big garden but my father didn't work that garden. My father had a bachelor friend. The bachelor quarters wasn't far from our place and he used to like gardening and we used to have all kinds of vegetables. Tomatoes and string beans and lima beans and parsley. Everything you could think of. Sometimes when I remember back, when I think about the nice things we had, great big tomatoes. Everything.

M: Can't buy those.

S: No worms then. (laughter) Not like now.

M: Was your father ever in any accidents or anything to do with his work?

S: An accident?

M: Yeh, you know, to do with his work. Or can you remember any. . . ?

S: No. No, no, none. But my husband. . .

M: . . .any big exciting happenings?

S: No. He worked so hard on the plantation and we used to have a lot of rain and he was a team luna, what they call that overseer, you know, and he took care of the plowing of the lands--the plantation lands--but we had nothing to do with it. And my father got only fifty dollars a month. Fifty dollars. And the month that he died, we already were on the homestead, they were raising him to sixty dollars. The check that came was sixty dollars.

M: About when would that be? Can you recall about what year?

S: Oh, I have to figure that out and I'm not so good on figures. Now I got married in 1915. You figure. I got married in 1915 and my father died in 1913. (long pause)

M: And he was. . .

S: And. . .well, what else?

M: That's it. That's what I wanted to know. Just give me an approximate time.

S: He died a very young man. Very young. Forty-nine years old. He was much older than my mother. My mother lived till ninety-three.

M: And so he was forty-nine. I'm not so good at numbers either. (laughs) So he was born in 1864 and he was eighteen when he came, so he got here in 1882. .

S: I was born in 1892.

M: You were born in 1892?

S: I was born in 1892, so figure that out. My father, after

he came, he got married I think nineteen years old and my mother, the first year, had my brother and the second year was me, so. And I was born in 1892 so you have to figure that all out.

M: Yes, okay. That gives me a rough idea anyway. Okay, can we go on from--you taught school for a few years.

S: Three years and when I got married I got out. I came to Honolulu.

M: You met your husband, though, over there.

S: My husband was working in the mill, the sugar mill. He was the engineer--the night engineer--for the mill and I met him there and he came to Honolulu right after that and then, when we were to get married he came down for me two years after that. We were engaged. We were together engaged for three years and I got married in 1915.

M: I see, then you came back to Honolulu and what did your husband do here?

S: My husband was working for the Dole Pineapple Company. He was a master mechanic there. He went as a machinist and they kept on raising him till he was master mechanic. When he died he was an engineer mechanic. He worked for thirty-eight years there.

M: Right here in the Dole Pineapple?

S: Dole Pineapple.

M: Where did you live?

S: I lived in all places. (Lynda laughs) I lived on Liholiho Street for eighteen years. We sold our place then we went to Kuliouou. We built a beautiful home. It's still there. Beautiful home and we sold that and when we sold it we went to Portlock. My husband bought a smaller house and we were there eighteen years and then the yard was too big for us and we were all alone. I only have two boys and the both of them were married and so we sold we sold the place on Portlock Road and we moved to the Tropicana [Royal Tropicana Hotel, Waikiki] for two years. We lived two years there and my husband passed away there and then I went to the Coast for seven weeks, I think, and then I was living in the apartment but I was all alone and then my boy enlarged his home for me and I paid for it. After that, I wasn't happy at all so I came here.

M: How do you like it here?

S: I like it very much. I'm all alone and they come to see me when it's convenient to them. They call me up. I'm very happy here.

M: Good.

S: My sister--she lived in Kauai--her husband died. I don't know how many years ago her husband died. About four, I think, or three years. He died after my husband and she's in the Arcadia.

M: Hm. What's her name?

S: Aguiar. Mrs. [B. I.] Aguiar.

M: Can you tell me something about--going back again to earlier times--about the Portuguese community that you grew up in? Were most of them first generation immigrants from Portugal?

S: I guess so. I guess they were.

M: Did you speak Portuguese?

S: Oh yes, I know how to speak the language.

M: Did you use it in your home?

S: Yes, we did. Um hm.

M: Did you have any particular customs or anything as a community group?

S: No.

M: Did you keep up any of your, you know, holidays or special traditions from the old country?

S: No. Oh, some of the people used to have parties but it wasn't connected with us, you know. We used to go to their parties, more of the lower class, you know.

M: Your father was sort of upper.

S: Yes. Uh huh.

M: Uh huh, I see.

S: But we used to go to these functions of the neighbors.

M: Did you have church-type functions, too?

S: No, at that time the church was so far away, we didn't have parties for the church or anything like that. We used to go to church, yes, but no parties then. I don't remember too much.

M: But all of the children were raised in the church?

S: Oh, we all were raised there. We all went to church. My father had a little brake, what they call it. I don't know, we used to call it a little brake. It was one horse and then the little wagon was two wheels and there was the seat in the back--sat my father and mother and one more--and then they had another seat--you know, kind of a plank there on the front where the children could sit. Just pile in there. (laughter)

M: And only one horse to pull you?

S: Only one horse to pull.

M: Boy, he must have worked hard, huh?

S: My father had beautiful horses. He could train horses, you know. He loved horses.

M: Did he work with the plantation horses?

S: Well, no, they gave him a horse to drive but he loved horses. He could train the horses. But we had lots to eat and not activities, but the children used to get together.

M: Where did you get, like, fresh meat?

S: Oh, my mother (chuckles). We used to raise our own cattle, you know. That is, my mother had sometimes three or four cows. We had a big pasture and we'd sell milk to the neighbors, five cents a quart. (Lynda laughs) And we delivered in regular bottles--beer bottles.

M: Beer bottles?

S: Well, it's called--we used to call a regular bottle that. They were kind of large but we didn't have bottles--milk bottles like they have now. It's entirely different. Those bottles are regular bottles, like liquor bottles. One bottle for five cents and we used to deliver milk. I used to milk a cow. I had my own cow that I used to milk when I was grown up.

M: Each of the kids had to help with the. . .

S: Yeh, to help because what was fifty dollars?

M: Yeh, right. Did you sell butter too?

S: We made our own butter. We didn't sell no butter. We had so many children. And my mother used to make cottage cheese. She saved everything. And when we had little calves, if it was a little male calf they used to raise it until it was quite big--I don't know how old; I couldn't tell you--and they'd slaughter and then my mother would corn [the meat]. . .

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

M: Oh, did you raise pigs too?

S: Oh yes, my mother would raise pigs, one pig or two. We always had one or two pigs, you know, in the corral. They didn't live far from the main building and we used to wash the pigpen.

M: Fun, huh. (Lynda laughs)

S: Lot of fun. Everything is disease now. We didn't think about anything like that, all we did was keep it clean. (laughs while saying this) We had the pigpen was right next to the wash trays--wash place--and all we did was get the hose and wash everything. We thought it was lot of fun.

My mother used to corn pork and they use to make blood sausages. Was delicious. (Lynda laughs)

M: Something I've never been able to eat.

S: Blood sausages and sausages. The best sausages that they sell now in the stores--the Portuguese sausages--are Gouveia's.

M: Oh, that's what I always buy.

S: That's the best.

M: I don't buy the other kind.

S: We don't. We never buy the other kind. Gouveia's is supposed to be the best. And my mother used to keep that stored away in lard, you know.

M: Where did you get the skins to pack it in?

- S: Oh, we'd buy that from the market.
- M: You could buy the sausage skins.
- S: Oh, yes. Um hm. It was hard work to clean that all up, you know. We didn't buy it already cleaned. We had to wash it. We had to clean it ourselves.
- M: How could you keep the sausage without refrigeration, though? Don't they have to be refrigerated?
- S: No. When you pickle the pork from one day to the other it's all right. They'd chop all that pork. Nobody ever died. Nobody was ever sick.
- M: But I mean the sausage itself will keep without refrigeration?
- S: Um hm, from one day to the other and then afterwards we'd smoke it. Smoke the sausages. This Gouveia's sausages are smoked. We used to smoke.
- M: I see. How did you smoke it? Did you have a smokehouse?
- S: Yeh, they'd make a little smokehouse outside. Big chunks of wood, you know, so that it would be heat and smoke and at night we'd bring that in the house because the dogs or anything like that. The next morning, put it back. Cured it.
- M: How long would you leave it in there?
- S: Oh, it'd be about two or three days, you know, back and forth until it was really cured. Oh it was a lot of fun. (chuckles)
- M: Yeh. You kept chickens too?
- S: Yeh, we had chickens.
- M: What was the staple in your food? Rice?
- S: Bread. We used to make our own bread. Um hm.
- M: Boy, that must have been a lot of work.
- S: We didn't make as much rice as my children eat now. We ate bread because my mother used to. I used to knead those great big pans of bread, say seven or eight loaves of bread at one time, not like these little loaves that we buy, you know. We had an oven outside in the yard for the neighbors.

The neighbors had to take care of them. My mother did one day; the other neighbor would do the next day. Use the oven. We had always a lot of wood from the plantation. The plantation would give us the wood.

M: You just had your oven, like, out in the yard.

S: A regular brick oven.

M: Oh. Oh, I see. And then did you cook on a regular stove in the house?

S: In the house was a regular stove, yes.

M: Wood-burning?

S: Yes, wood. My mother once in awhile would bake bread but took too long. They'd rather do it out in the oven because it would go all at one time.

M: Yeh. You didn't have running water?

S: Not in the house, no.

M: So you carried it all in?

S: Um hm. Everything was carried in.

M: You didn't have a pump or anything.

S: No, no, no, no. We didn't have a pump. Out in that plantation Onomea Sugar Company had a lot of water, you know, and the people had enough.

M: I see. Did your mother make all your clothing too?

S: My mother didn't sew but my aunt used to sew. My mother's sister was kind of a seamstress and she'd do the sewing for us. Not fancy things. (Lynda chuckles)

M: Yeh.

S: I'm going to put a Rolaid in my mouth.

M: Oh, you're not feeling well?

S: It's every day the same thing. (she gets up and walks away and the recorder is turned off and on again)

M: Most people won't say when they were born.

- S: Well, I always say, "I was born in 1892," and the other day--last week Friday--we had a party for all those that were born in August and I sat at the table too, but it's all those, but my birthday is next Friday. This following Friday, so my children are going to take me out to dinner. I hope so! They told me before. (laughter) They might change their minds.
- M: Well, I don't want to wear you out.
- S: I don't know if I told you things right but I didn't lie about anything.
- M: No, no, I'm sure you didn't. (long pause) Maybe you could tell me a little more about what going to school was like then. What sort of things you did in school.
- S: Not very much in the school in those days. We didn't do very much.
- M: Like, how would the days start off and stuff like that?
- S: I don't know. (chuckles) I remember one principal that we had was Mr. [William] McCluskey. He was a bachelor but finally he got married to one of the Lyman girls [Esther Rosalie Lyman]. And ah--oh what was I going to say? He was awfully strict with the kids in school and all the children were afraid of him because if they didn't mind he had a big strap, you know. He'd strike the kids. He couldn't do that now. (both chuckle)
- M: No.
- S: No. But we'd all get together that when the bell would ring we'd stand in line for each classroom and then go in our room. That's all I remember.
- M: What kind of stuff did you learn, though?
- S: Hmm?
- M: What kind of, you know, reading and writing did you do?
- S: Oh well, we had first grade books and arithmetic. The schools were not like now, I don't think they are. Like blackboards all around. That's all I remember. Great big sliding doors because there was in one main building three rooms and the sliding doors in between where the children used to get together, you know, with the teachers for exercising and things like that. It was a lot of fun, when you

think about it, you know.

M: Did you have to work hard at your books and stuff?

S: Well, we had to do our homework and things at school. They don't want the children now--the mothers don't want the kids to do anything in school but we used to do cleaning blackboards and cleaning rooms and everything when we were kids. We had to do all of that work and the parents never said, "Boo." We had to do those things.

M: Did you have homework that you had to take home and do at home?

S: Yes, but not much. Division and things like that. No, not much homework, but it was a big school. When I was at school, we had a big school.

M: Did you ever go on school outings? Trips?

S: No. (chuckles)

M: None of that stuff.

S: None of that stuff. Where was the wagons to take us around? We did all our social work right at school, kids. And now they have everything you could think of.

M: Did the kids bring their lunches?

S: Oh yes, we used to bring our lunches. (long pause)

M: And you had how many children?

S: I just had two boys.

M: Could you give me their names?

S: Herbert and John. First is John and Herbert.

M: Um hm, okay. I got that on the tape. Did you work after you were married?

S: No.

M: You never went back to teaching or. . .

S: No, I never went back to teaching, I just stayed home, kept house for my husband.

M: Were you active in any organizations?

S: Oh, I was active in church affairs, yes, I was active.

M: What church did you go to here in Honolulu?

S: Punahou. I'm a Catholic.

M: Oh, you went to that little. . .

S: Yeh, church. It's not little now, it's a big church.

M: Sacred Heart.

S: Sacred Heart's Church. That's where I went. And I belong to the--I don't belong now--the guild. Saint Francis Hospital Guild.

M: Oh, yeh.

S: I belonged to that for years but I moved to Portlock Road. It was so far to get to town, you know, to those places and I just drifted away but whenever they needed help, I always helped.

M: Uh huh. Did your husband take part in anything outside his work?

S: No, my husband wasn't a church-goer at all. Oh, he was a Catholic too but he didn't bother. Whatever I did was all right, you know.

M: Did he take part in other activities besides church?

S: No. No. And I never did.

M: Did you know a Robello family on the other island?
(recorder is turned off and on again) To Honolulu or. . .

S: Yeh, I came to Honolulu twice before I was married.

M: Um hm, those were big events.

S: Oh, big events. . .

M: Where would you stay in town?

S: Oh, I stayed with a cousin of mine, Mrs. De Mello.

M: Oh. Did your parents ever go back to Portugal?

S: No. No.

M: Never did?

S: Never did.

M: Did they want to?

S: My mother always talked, because my father died very young, my mother always talked about where she lived. I don't know, my mother had such a good memory.

M: Of her childhood?

S: Um hm, as a child, even after she was old. She'd say, "If I go to the old country, I could find my place--myself in the street where I lived." She always said that, but I don't know. I have visions of everything in Hilo, but I don't go there so much. Everything is different now.

M: Yeh, that's the way when things change so fast.

S: You from Hawaii too?

M: No. I've lived here a long time. My husband's from Hawaii. He was born in Pahala.

S: Oh, oh, oh. What's his name?

M: Well, he's a member of the Cushnie family.

S: Oh, oh, oh. Cushnie? I don't know those people.

M: His grandfather was manager at Pahala. (recorder is turned off and on again)

S: Everybody had a big yard. We had a great big--we call it the pasture because we had a couple of horses and cows and the children would all come because our neighbor on the side is the Araujo girls. I don't know if you know them. They all--well, not well-to-do but they're all well-educated.

M: I know that name but I. . .

S: You don't know them? They're all teachers. Retired and all girls. I think they had thirteen children, all girls and one boy.

M: Oh my gosh!

S: The last one was a boy and they were our neighbors next door and everytime my mother was to have a baby, she was

to have a baby too. And my mother would have a boy or a girl but we had boys and girls and they had a girl and my father used to feel so sorry for him because he craved for a son. And after the last one--I think it was thirteen children they had. Twelve girls and a boy.

M: They finally got a boy?

S: They finally had a boy. He has a very good job here. He lives in Kailua. Araujo.

M: How do you spell that? A-R. . .

S: A-R-A-U-J-O, I think. (she spells it again with a "G" but the "J" is correct)

M: Boy, I'd never know how to pronounce that. How do you?

S: Araujo.

M: Araujo. Hm. I don't know how to pronounce Portuguese names. They always throw me.

S: (she misspells it again with a "G") Yeh, I have it right. They were our neighbors and they used to come and play with the boys, you know. It was a regular family affair, you know. All the girls and there was no- we didn't talk about sex. We didn't know anything. (Lynda chuckles) Nothing like that. Now they know everything.

M: Yeh. Right.

S: Boys and girls were so modest about everything.

M: What sort of clothes did you wear every day?

S: Hm?

M: What sort of clothes did you wear?

S: Oh, regular clothes.

M: Did you wear long skirts?

S: No, no, not too long. No, not too long.

M: Long stockings?

S: Yes, long stockings. Oh yes, when we went to church we had long stockings. (chuckles)

M: What did you wear to play in?

S: Just barefeet, no shoes; no stockings.

M: But dresses.

S: Just dresses.

M: I mean, you didn't wear shorts and pants and so forth?

S: No, no, that wasn't the. . .

M: Even as children you couldn't wear that.

S: No, we didn't wear shorts, no. It was dresses all the time. Little petticoats and pants and. . .

M: Lots of ironing.

S: Yes. (Lynda laughs) Sometimes--I was the only big girl in the family. I used to iron sometimes till eleven, twelve o'clock to help my mother. I worked real hard when I was a young girl, that's why I'm feeble-minded now. (Lynda chuckles)

M: No, I think you've done very well.

S: No, I'm feeble.

COUNTER AT 233/SIDE 2

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed, edited, and final typing done by Katherine B. Allen

Addendum

Corrections, additions, deletions to material made by Mrs. Silva's sister, Mrs. Beatrice Ignacio Aguiar

- 2: Mother came to Hawaii at the age of seven.

Father's family came to Hawaii first without him. They wanted to make sure he finished his education; after he graduated from high school, his family sent for him in Portugal.

Mother is from Lisbon, Portugal. She never finished school, and always regretted it.

Father is from San Miguel Island, Portugal.

- 3: Father's father owned the land singly at the Hakalau homestead, not with Uncle [Pacheco].

Onomea Sugar Plantation was in Papaikou on the Big Island, located about 5 1/2 miles from Hilo, where the Onomea Arch is, on the way towards Honoka'a.

- 4: Father made fifty to sixty dollars a month as a skilled laborer. All were educated in the family. Unskilled laborers made only one dollar a day.

My parents met, married, and lived on the Big Island.

- 5: They used T and G lumber for the floors [of the plantation houses], and there were spaces in between the boards. When we cleaned house, we threw buckets of water on the floors and scrubbed it that way. The result was that the floor boards sort of rotted and the spaces in between got bigger, because the boards shrunk from all the water.

- 7: Julia was much older when she started to ride the train. This was after Father's death in 1913. I was fourteen, and Julia was nine years older than I, so she was about twenty-three by then.

- 10: When Julia got married, Frank was a junior in high school. After she moved to Honolulu, my younger sister, Lucille, went to stay with her and help her out with her babies. Lucy went to McKinley, and later graduated from Normal

School. Stephanie, who was right underneath Lucy, was Julia's pet and she didn't finish high school, but came to Honolulu to take voice lessons. She had a beautiful voice.

- 12: Father was almost like a veterinarian in those days. He was always called on to help with the neighbors' animals whenever there was something wrong with them.
- 13: Whenever we slaughtered a cow, the neighbors would all come to help, then we would all eat it. And the neighbors would do the same thing for us.
- 16: Father wanted to make sure all of us were educated. Jack Moir's father was head of the plantation, and his idea was to keep the children of the workers uneducated so they would continue to work on the plantation. Manuel and his friend, John Lewis, used to ride their horses to Hilo High School every day--quite a ways away. When Mr. Moir found out, he spoke to my father and told him that wasn't necessary because his [my father's] children would always have a job with the plantation. But he said all his kids would get an education. Later John Lewis wanted to marry Julia, but he was not a Christian so my father would not let him.

Later on Manuel stayed with an aunt and went to school from there, then came home on the weekends. Mr. Kinney, who was the head of the Board of Education, asked my mother if she would let some young teachers board with us. Teachers' salaries were then thirty-five dollars a month, so Mother agreed to let them stay for ten dollars a month apiece. But she told him that she had a large family to feed, so she would cook for her family first, then the girls would have to take care of their own meals. But when she made Portuguese bean soup--about two or three times a week--the teachers thought it smelled so good that Mother left a little in the pot for them. And everytime after that when we had bean soup, Mother would save some for them. They were from Honolulu and had never had that before, but they really got to know and like a lot of Portuguese foods.

Children of Marion and Stephanie Marques Ignacio:

Manuel--died in 1970

Julia Silva--died in 1972

Frank--mortician in Hilo, Hawaii

George

Alfred

Beatrice Aguiar--nine years younger than Julia

Tony--died at age thirteen

Lucille--five years younger than Julia

Stephanie

Cecilia--died young of diptheria

Marion

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THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.